2. Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M
114

Choroti and Toba Indians is not so rich as I wished it to be, nor have I been able to realize my plan of returning later to Chaco for the sake of completing it. My next great expedition took me to the Indians of the Amazon territory. However, I think the new facts I have been able to gather relating to their general sociology, their customs and beliefs, magic dances, etc., form an important contribution to our knowledge of the intellectual culture of the Chaco Indians, so strangely neglected by earlier ethnographical travellers. In fact, the dances of the South American Indians have never before been the object of detailed studies. The Chaco culture has in many respects a character of its own, differing markedly, for instance, from the cultures peculiar to the tropical virgin forests in northern South America. Taken as a whole it is much poorer; neither the material nor the intellectual culture in these inhospitable regions has attained the same stage of development as in the regions better endowed by nature. Even the rites and ceremonies in which religious life finds expression among the Chaco Indians are comparatively few.

C
619
361

The Choroti are split up into three minor tribes which are settled in different parts of the territory occupied by these Indians. One of these sub-tribes lives on the left bank of the Pilcomayo just in latitude 22° S. and a few leagues to the north of it. Their chief at the time when I lived among them was Toula. A second sub-tribe lives about ten leagues east of them in the interior of the country. In March 1912 I undertook an expedition to these Indians, who had never before been visited by a European. Two Choroti Indians accompanied me as guides, and without them it would have been impossible to find one's way through this maze of shrublike forest land, broken here and there by small open plains. Whereas the country adjacent to the great water source Pilcomayo is fairly fertile, the soil in the interior is too dry and sandy to be suitable for cultivation. Agriculture is practised by the Choroti of the interior on a still more modest scale than by the river Indians, and since they are poor hunters their life must be extremely hard at those periods of the year when there are no wild fruits. These Choroti, like the rest, live in small communities and their total number does not exceed a few hundreds. Their chief at that time was a comparatively young man called Anempä.

The third and largest Choroti tribe is found within a few leagues of Fortín Guachalla, the Bolivian military settlement mentioned before. These Indians only live on the banks of the river during the dry season, when the scarcity of water renders life in the interior impossible. The

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco

Choroti SK6

necessity of fishing also at that time compels them to stay near the river. But as soon as the rainy season sets in and the algaroba, tusca, and other fruits begin to ripen, the Indians take up their abode in the forest close by some small lagoon or a rare water-hole several leagues from the river, spending most of their »summer« time in drinking algaroba beer, feasting, and dancing. The Indians of the Guachalla region form the main bulk of the Choroti tribe and number about a thousand individuals. Their immediate neighbours in the south are the Ashluslay, to whom the Choroti are closely related in their culture. There is much communication between the two tribes and intermarriage is frequent. Thus the chief of the Choroti, the old Ātamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but since mother-right prevails among the Chaco Indians, he had become a member of the Choroti tribe.

There seems to be a certain antagonism between the different Choroti tribes, in consequence of which they have very little intercourse with one another. I particularly noticed such an antagonism between those Choroti who live on the river and those living in the interior. It would have been impossible for me to get a guide among the people of the chief Toula to accompany me to Anempā's tribe. Since to these Indians, who in general live to a great extent by fishing, the possession of the river is of great importance, I suppose it is originally due to this enmity that some Choroti Indians have settled in the inhospitable regions in the interior where they are found to-day. These latter even speak a somewhat different dialect of the Choroti language. Thus, one of the commonest words in the language, the word for 'house', is in the dialect of the river Indians *uk*, in the dialect of the inland Indians again *sáuo*.

The Choroti living on the river call the Choroti tribe inhabiting the interior of the Chaco *Asówa*.

The total number of the Choroti I estimate at about 2,000 or a little more.[1]) The surrounding tribes are much larger. Of these I have already mentioned the southern neighbours of the Choroti, the Ashluslay, whom the Choroti call *Ahle*. Their neighbours in the north are the Tobas, whom they call *Johlōki*, and another Chaco tribe, the Tapiete, whom they call *Ohuénik*. Their neighbours in the west again are the Mataco, whom the Choroti call *Hotenúk*. They have dealings with all these tribes, although at times they have been at war with them, or at

[1]) Consequently, when Nordenskiöld estimates the Choroti at 4,000 individuals, this is a great exaggeration.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S/12
Choroti SK6

SOCIAL LIFE

CHAPTER III.

Social organization. Chiefs.

M T C 619

The social organization among all tribes of the Pilcomayo is fundamentally the same, although the Tobas represent a more highly developed type of society than the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay. Among all of them the »tribe» is a fairly loose social unit: being simply composed by families related to one another by blood. A clan organization in the strict sense of the word does not exist among the Chaco Indians [1]) and totemism is entirely unknown, although the beginnings of a totemistic system may be traced among the Tobas. The appellation »Ostrich-men» given to the Tobas by some of their neighbours, and certain ideas held of this bird by the Indians themselves undoubtedly point in this direction. As to the *Choroti*, I have already mentioned that they are split up into three principal sub-tribes, each occupying a special territory within the tract which these Indians regard as belonging exclusively to themselves. Although the different sub-tribes feel themselves, in a general way, parts of the same tribal unit, the Choroti people (*Jóhuaha*), there is not much communication between them and, as I have stated before, the relation between the Choroti of the Pilcomayo and the Choroti living in the interior is almost one of antagonism. Within the sub-tribes, again, the feeling of blood-relationship is strong. Such a sub-tribe consists of a number of village communities, each composed of a few families closely related to one another. As a rule each village has its chief, *anetsiãs*, and over the whole sub-tribe there is even a »great chief».

C 619

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[1]) When in the following pages I sometimes use the word »clan», this term has merely reference to the »sub-tribes», by which I simply mean a number of families recognizing consanguinity. The chief reason why the »sub-tribes» of the Chaco Indians cannot be called »clans» proper is that they are not exogamous.

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